

UNIT 58

OIL AND INCENSE

(Exodus 30:22-38)

Two parts form this instruction: oil (vv. 22-33) and incense (vv. 34-38). In the section on the oil we have the description of the oil (22-25a), its purpose of anointing (25b-30), and the demand for perpetual compliance (31-34). In the section on the incense we have the description (34, 35), the use (36), and the demand for compliance (37, 38).

I. Oil is the mark of consecration.

It was to be made of myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia--essences extracted and mixed with the oil. It was used to anoint the tent, vessels, and people--to sanctify them (*qiddesh* used with *maashah*). Oil was always used to anoint kings, priests, prophets. It was a symbol used to set them apart for special use in God's household. So special oil was to be prepared.

Sanctification is the work of the Spirit today, but the terminology of anointing continues. The anointing of the Spirit refers to more than salvation--the Spirit of God sets someone apart as most holy, that is, specially given to this spiritual ministry. With the setting apart is the enabling by the power and gifts of the Spirit.

One often hears today people praying for anointing, but this is not a biblical way to say it. John says that we have an anointing--so we cannot pray for an anointing. We can pray that the Spirit (the anointing) will be evidenced by spiritual power and righteousness.

II. Incense is the mark of pleasing service, especially prayer.

The idea here is that an aroma that pleases us would please God. It was burnt at the altar of incense to accompany the prayers--that they might be pleasing to God (see under altar of incense). The incense to be made was to be "pure and holy" (*tahor* and *qadosh*). This refers to its quality and use in the Sanctuary. What the incense illustrated the apostle commands--we must be a sweet smelling aroma to God in our service, always pleasing him.

So the essence of the passage is that *the servants of God must be set apart by the Holy Spirit for ministry and must be pleasing to God in that ministry.*